GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEFENCE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3963
ANSWERED ON:09.12.2016
Missing IAF Aircraft
Venugopal Dr. Ponnusamy

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Air Force AN-32 aircraft went missing in July this year;

(b) if so, the details of steps taken by the Government for searching and locating missing Indian Air Force (IAF) transport aircraft AN-32 along with the results and findings obtained therefrom;

(c) whether the Government has taken help of foreign countries / agencies for searching the missing IAF transport aircraft AN-32;

(d) if so, the details and present status thereof and the precautionary measures taken by the Government to avert such mishappenings in the future; and

(e) whether the Government proposes to phase out AN-32 aircraft from IAF and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (DR. SUBHASH BHAMRE)
IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
????? ????? ?????? (??. ????? ?????)

(a) & (b): An Indian Air Force (IAF) AN-32 aircraft on a routine sortie from IAF Station Tambaram to Port Blair went missing at 1225 hours on 22.07.2016 approximately 150 nm East of Chennai.

A massive search operation 'Op Talash' was launched for search of the missing aircraft. A total of 18 Indian Naval ships, 01 submarine and 08 Indian Coast Guard ships were deployed for search of the missing IAF aircraft. A total of 301 ship days of search were undertaken by these ships. In addition 14 Indian Navy (IN) aircraft, 06 Indian Coast Guard aircraft and 10 IAF aircraft were deployed for the search wherein 290 sorties were flown, totaling approximately 1280 flying hours. Geological Survey of India vessel Samudra Ratnakar was also deployed to undertake sub-bottom profiling in the area and National Institute of Oceanography and Technology vessel Sagar Nidhi was deployed to carry out sea bed search using Remotely Operated Vehicle to a depth of 3000m.

National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), Hyderabad was requested for high-resolution satellite image of area around datum. Indigenous satellite such as CARTOSAT 2A & 2B which have a resolution of 0.8m were also used for satellite imagery. However, no concrete evidence with respect to missing IAF AN-32 aircraft has emerged.

(c) & (d): Assistance of the United States and the Russian Federation Navy was taken for the search of the missing IAF AN-32 transport aircraft. However, no results correlating to the missing IAF aircraft were reported.

All transport aircraft and helicopters of IAF undertaking maritime operations have now been equipped with Underwater Locating Beacon (ULB).

(e) Phasing out of aircraft and their replacement with new generation aircraft depends upon the national security / strategic objectives and operational requirements of the defence forces and is reviewed by the Government from time to time. This is a continuous process.

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